

**Speech by
H.E. Dr. Yaseen Khayyat
Director General of Jordan Institution for Standards and Metrology**

**Your Excellency Mr. Sharif Al-Zu'bi, the Minister of Industry and Trade,
Your Excellency Mr. Robert Van Der Meulen, the Ambassador of the
European Commission Delegation in Jordan,
Your Excellency Mr. Stefan Bantle, the Commercial Counselor of the
Federal Republic of Germany,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the start-off meeting of the Twinning Project for Strengthening the Jordan Institution for Standards and Metrology for its compliance with the EU-Jordan Association Agreement.

The implementation of this agreement should bring about a new level of competitiveness to the Jordanian domestic market. Local industries have to adapt and become more competitive if they want to survive in the new era. The prevailing spirit is one of free market and equal trade opportunities, in which industry is provided fresh export opportunities, yet faced with increased challenges to maintain its local market shares.

Although Jordan is becoming more competitive in global markets, we could jeopardize our future economic growth by failing to pay due attention to the importance of standardization, metrology, conformity assessment, and accreditation to international trade. As science and technology are developing apace, and because more and more countries are tying their economic future to technological innovation, standardization, metrology, and conformity assessment will always form the backbone of industry and trade, and consequently are indispensable in firing economic growth.

Standards are so ubiquitous that they are taken for granted and people generally consider them as interesting as watching grass grow or paint dry. However, with the principles of openness, transparency, relevance, coherence, and consensus in the development process of standards, products will only interoperate only if they adhere to standards. As an example, IT systems and networks will not be generally compatible in the absence of standardization, making data exchange haphazard at best.

Jordan's activities in standardization, metrology and conformity assessment are concentrated in the public sector. In this respect, there is a need for a more dynamic role played by the private sector. Our systems were established to support the national goals of ensuring the health and safety of consumers and the protection of the environment, in addition to fulfilling the technical needs of the Jordanian market, and reinforcing the economy by providing the vital quality infrastructure for exports. So I hope that the private sector in Jordan would work in partnership with the government to prevent our products and companies from being locked out of future international markets.

The partially built and non-focused infrastructure of standardization, metrology, accreditation, and conformity assessment hampers our competitiveness in the global market. We should work hard at upgrading our national systems and eliminating technical barriers to trade, which should start in priority sectors to achieve mutual recognition in testing, inspection and certification systems and results between our two trading parties. Our vision should be the same as the international one, "one standard, one test – accepted everywhere".

I believe our challenge is to have our national standards and conformity assessment systems fully harmonized with European standards and systems, with the intention that our close cooperation would enhance bilateral and global trade. As a developing nation, we often find ourselves in a reactive posture in the adoption of international standards and implementation of international requirements. The new project will assist us in playing a more proactive role in the preparation of international standards and becoming full members of relevant European and international organizations. I firmly believe that Jordanian industries and services should have more than a passing interest in participating in developing international standards and conformity assessment systems. Such standards and systems will set the terms of relationships between our suppliers and customers.

Working with our German experts will surely help us achieve international recognition of the Jordanian accreditation system. This means that Jordanian products that are tested, inspected, or certified by nationally accredited conformity assessment bodies would be accepted in the European market without further testing and certification. Obviously, the accreditation and certification have to be supported by a well-developed metrological system.

The overall objective of the Twinning Project is to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Jordan Institution for Standards and Metrology to fulfill the government's commitments within the EU-Jordan Association Agreement through upgrading the legal and institutional capacities of JISM and developing the Jordanian quality infrastructure and market surveillance systems, in order to provide the appropriate environment for exporters and importers.

We need to be ambitious but at the same time realistic in terms of achieving our objectives, as there are some preconditions to attaining them. Nonetheless, setting our sights too low would definitely curb our capacity to accomplish our goals. At the same time, we should avoid unrealistic expectations of the stakeholders. This means that in order to accomplish the project objectives that were set, we need to work according to the well-defined work plan under the constraints of a limited budget and implementation period.

Our past experience has shown that we are best able to make progress in our project when we have the full cooperation and involvement of the relevant stakeholders. These include governmental regulatory agencies, industry, trade, the services sector, research centers and laboratories, conformity assessment bodies, as well as quality, environment and consumer protection organizations. This is important in order to generate momentum and make progress in crucial matters, namely market surveillance, product liability, and technical regulations at the ministerial level.

This is a snapshot of where we are, and where we want to be. The road ahead is a rough one, but I am sure I can count on the hard work and the competence of JISM management and staff, in addition to your support as stakeholders, to smooth out the ride.

Let me express my sincerest thanks to the European Union for financing this project and to all of you for being here today. I urge each and every one of you to bring your organization's views to the discussion table. I also look forward to your putting forward your points of view and ideas, which our experts could pick up to enhance our performance and achieve your expectations in the forthcoming Twinning Project.

Once again, thank you all for taking part in this event.